

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAN JOSE 0508

LIMDIS

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN AND CEN COUNTRY DIRECTOR WADE
MATTHEWS ONLY

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PBOR, PGOV, SNAR, NU, GT, ES, HO, VE, BH, CU, UK, CS,
US

1. FOLLOWING IS A DRAFT FOR CLEARANCE COVERING THE PRINCIPAL TOPICS
DISCUSSED DURING BREAKFAST MEETING. PLEASE ADVISE OF CLEARANCE OR
CHANGES OR ADDITIONS DESIRED.

2. A VARIETY OF BILATERAL AND REGIONAL ISSUES WERE TOUCHED ON IN
A ONE AND ONE-HALF HOUR-LONG BREAKFAST MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT
ODUBER AND ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN AT THE EMBASSY RESIDENCE,
JANUARY 30, 191(. CENTRAL AMERICAN DIRECTOR MATTHEWS AND AMBASSADOR
WEISSMAN WERE PRESENT.

3. ELECTIONS. ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN EXPRESSED HIS CONTINUING
ADMIRATION FOR THE OPENNESS AND VITALITY OF THE COSTA RICAN
ELECTORAL PROCESS, AMPLY CONFIRMED BY OBSERVATIONS DURING HIS BRIEF
VISIT. PRESIDENT ODUBER EXHIBITED CONSIDERABLE CONFIDENCE THAT THE
TIDE HAD TURNED IN FAVOR OF THE PLN CANDIDATE IN RECENT WEEKS. HE
REPORTED THAT HIS TRAVELS IN THE COUNTRY DURING THE PAST FOUR DAYS
HAD REASSURED HIM THAT THE BASIC STRENGTH OF HIS PARTY, PLUS ERRORS
MADE BY THE MAJOR OPPOSITION GROUP, WOULD LEAD TO A COMFORTABLE
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VICTORY ON FEBRUARY 5. HE PARTICULARLY EMPHASIZED THE FACT THAT
CARAZO, WHOSE POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY WAS VERY SIMILAR TO HIS OWN,
HAD BEEN FORCED INTO COSTLY COMPROMISES BY THE CONSERVATIVE ELE-
MENTS SUPPORTING HIM, AND SO UNWISELY HAD ANNOUNCED POLICIES WHICH
COST MUCH OF HIS EARLY SUPPORT AMONG LOWER CLASS, MORE LIBERAL
GROUPS.

3. NICARAGUA. IN RESPONSE TO ASST SECRETARY TODMAN'S EXPRESSION OF USG CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE FURTHER COMPLICATIONS IN THAT TROUBLED SITUATION, PRESIDENT ODUBER INDICATED THE DANGER THAT ANY ABRUPT CHANGE IN NICARAGUAN LEADERSHIP COULD HAVE DETRIMENTAL SPILL-OVER EFFECTS THROUGHOUT THE SUB-REGION, PARTICULARLY IN COSTA RICA. HIS HOPE WAS THAT A PEACEFUL TRANSITION WOULD OCCUR, WELL BEFORE 1981, BRINGING MEANINGFUL POLITICAL PARTICIPATION TO THE PEOPLE OF NICARAGUA. NOTING THAT CERTAIN NICARAGUAN ELEMENTS CONSIDER COSTA RICA A SANCTUARY FOR "SUBVERSION" AGAINST THAT COUNTRY (A VIEW ASST SECRETARY TODMAN COMMENTED PERVADES ALL TOP GON CIRCLES), ODUBER SEES THE POTENTIAL FOR AN ARMED INVASION OF COSTA RICA FROM NICARAGUA SHOULD VIOLENCE AND ARMED CONFLICT BREAK OUT WITHIN THAT COUNTRY AT THIS TIME. THE GOCR HAS BEEN IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH THE GON ON PAST AND CURRENT EFFORTS BY COSTA RICAN-BASED ANTI-SOMOZA ELEMENTS KNOWN TO BE RECEIVING EXTERNAL SUPPORT FROM VENEZUELA AND PANAMA AND ACQUIRING ARMS HERE, BUT ODUBER STILL WORRIES THAT THE GON MAY NOT CONSIDER THIS SUFFICIENT COOPERATION. AFTER AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON HOW A SUITABLE "TRANSITION" MIGHT DEVELOP, INCLUDING ASST SECRETARY TODMAN'S REPORTING ON A CONVERSATION HERE WITH THE GON AMBASSADOR TO COSTA RICA NAD LACAYO'S SUGGESTION THAT HE WOULD BE WILLING TO URGE SOMOZA TO PERMIT A MULTI-PARTY OPPOSITION TO DEVELOP, ODUBER ECHOED THE VIEW EXPRESSED BY FOREIGN MINISTER FACIO THAT NEW GON FOREIGN MINISTER QUINTANA WAS LIKELY TO BE THE KEY MAN IN ANY PACIFIC TRANSITION IN NICARAGUA. ODUBER LISTED NICARAGUA AS AHEAD OF THE OTHER THREE CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES IN ACCOMPLISHING SOME SOCIAL PROGRESS IN RECENT YEARS, AND LAMENTED THE

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INABILITY OF SOMOZA'S OPPOSITION TO DEVELOP A VIABLE POLITICAL ALTERNATIVE.

4. BELIZE. AFTER ASST SECRETARY TODMAN'S UP-DATING OF THE CURRENT STATE OF NEGOTIATIONS, PRESIDENT ODUBER STATED HE BELIEVES THAT HE CAN INFLUENCE PRICE IN THE DIRECTION OF ACCEPTING A REASONABLE ARRANGEMENT WITH GUATEMALA, CEDING THE "NECESSARY" TOKEN SLICE OF TERRITORY IN EXCHANGE FOR TREATY PROVISIONS MORE SUITED TO PRESERVING THE SOVEREIGN INTEGRITY OF AN INDEPENDENT BELIZE. AFTER ELECTIONS HERE, HE PLANS TO INVITE PRICE TO VISIT COSTA RICA IN ORDER TO PRESS HIS VIEW THAT BELIZE BE TREATED AS A CENTRAL AMERICAN ISSUE AND TO HELP RESOLVE THE CONFLICT BY OFFERING TO SEEK FOR BELIZE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT UNDER THE CACM, AS WAS ONCE ENJOYED BY HONDURAS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAN JOSE 0508

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5. CUBA. PRESIDENT ODUBER ADVISED THAT CUBAN FOREIGN MINISTER MALMIERCA HAD VISITED HIM RECENTLY IN ORDER TO EXPLAIN ITS AFRICAN POLICIES, STRESSING VERY INTENSELY AND ABLY THAT CUBA WAS NOT SERVING AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOVIET POLICY, BUT THAT IT SENSED AN OBLIGATION TO ASSIST INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENTS IN AFRICA AS A PURELY CUBAN RESPONSIBILITY.

6. EL SALVADOR/HONDURAS. PRESIDENT ODUBER INDICATED OPTIMISM OVER A SETTLEMENT IN 1978. HE COMMENTED FAVORABLY ON ROMERO'S CURRENT EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE SALVADORAN SITUATION DESPITE HIS VERY DIFFICULT POSITION BETWEEN RIGHT AND LEFT EXTREMES, INCLUDING "POLITICIZED" CHURCH LEADERS.

7. GUATEMALA. IN RESPONSE TO A QUESTION AS TO HOW THE GUATEMALAN ELECTORAL CONTEST WAS VIEWED BY HIM, PRESIDENT ODUBER REPLIED THAT HE EXPECTED ROMEO LUCAS TO WIN, WHICH UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD BE THE BEST RESULT. HE ADDED THAT ROMEO LUCAS' RUNNING MATE VILLALVAM KRAMER WAS A CHANGED MAN FROM THE LEFTIST HE KNEW 20 YEARS AGO AND WOULD CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO A ROMEO LUCAS ADMINISTRATION.

8. CACM. OTHERWISE ON CENTRAL AMERICA, HE EXPRESSED A BELIEF THAT
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STEPS TO IMPROVE THE CACM WOULD BE FORTHCOMING, ALBEIT WITH LIMITATIONS ON BENEFITS TO COSTA RICA, SO EXPLAINING HIS EXPANDING INTEREST IN THE ENTIRE CARIBBEAN BASIN AS A MARKET FOR GREATER ECONOMIC AS WELL AS POLITICAL INTERCHANGE.

9. PRESIDENT CARTER'S LATIN AMERICAN TRIP. PRESIDENT ODUBER ASKED ASSISTANT SECRETARY TODMAN TO URGE PRESIDENT CARTER TO CONSIDER

EVEN A VERY BRIEF STOPOVER IN COSTA RICA, THOUGH IT WOULD BE BEFORE THE INAUGURATION OF A NEW PRESENT ON MAY 8, TO REAFFIRM THE UNITED STATES' HIGH REGARD FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS.

10. HUMAN RIGHTS. PRESIDENT ODUBER SAID THAT EARLY IN HIS CAREER HE HAD WANTED TO BRING DOWN GOVERNMENTS, BUT WAS NOW FIRMLY CONVINCED THAT IMPROVED HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES AND MORE ACCEPTABLE POLITICAL PROCESS HAD TO BE PRESSED ON OTHER GOVERNMENTS MOST CAREFULLY IF POSITIVE CHANGE IS TO RESULT AND MUST PROVE EFFECTIVE.

11. YOUTH SYMPHONY. PRESIDENT ODUBER REITERATED COSTA RICA'S STRONG INTEREST IN THE GROUP'S PERFORMANCE DURING EARLY SPRING RESPONDING TO MRS CARTER'S INVITATION TO PLAY IN THE WHITE HOUSE.

12. IDB. PRESIDENT ODUBER EMPHASIZED STRONGLY HIS HOPE THAT COSTA RICA WOULD BE GIVEN US HELP TO ACHIEVE MORE REASONABLE CREDIT TERMS FOR ITS HYDROELECTRIC PROGRAMS, TO SUPPORT AND IN RECOGNITION OF ITS CONCERTED EFFORT TO REDUCE PETROLEUM IMPORTS THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF A BALANCED ENERGY PROGRAM. HE SAID HE WILL CONTINUE TO PRESS THE VENEZUELAN PRESIDENT TO HOLD THE LINE OF PETROLEUM PRICES, SINCE PREFERENTIAL TREATMENT TO LDCS FROM VENEZUELA HAS NOT BEEN FORTHCOMING, EXCEPT FOR CUBA.

13. VESCO. PRESIDENT ODUBER INDICATED THAT VESCO WAS NOW DOWN TO TWO PROPERTIES IN COSTA RICA AND IS TAKING STEPS TO LEAVE COSTA RICA, THOUGH HE REMAINS HINDERED BY EXISTING LITIGATION WHICH
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PREVENTS HIM FROM SO DOING.

14. WHEN APPROVED, SUGGEST FOLLOWING POSTS FOR LATERAL DISTRIBUTION: MANAGUA, GUATEMALA, SALVADOR, TEGUCIGALPA, BELIZE, CARACAS, HAVANA, LONDON.
WEISSMAN

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